

LOAN DESK

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## NOTES OF THE WEEK

**T**ARIFFS for revenue are now the law of the land and the quota for cereals will follow. The revolution of fiscal policy has been achieved with apparent ease and absence of friction, but the political calm is in fact delusive. It is true that many Free Trades here accepted the Tariff for Revenue as a disagreeable necessity, but they are still ready to fight a couple of rearguard actions—one against any actual Protection, and another against any equivalent reduction of Direct Taxation.

### A Government Crisis

Of these the second is at the moment of more political importance. Lord Snowden takes the view that the revenue from the tariff which is now in force should not be applied to the reduction of Income-tax, and it is understood that Sir Herbert Samuel—who has again been fulminating against the policy of the Cabinet of which he is a member—shares that sentiment, as do other of his Liberal colleagues in the Government—with the noteworthy exception of Mr. Runciman.

If that view is persisted in, it means either a re-casting of the provisional plans for the Budget to be introduced next month, or a

definite Cabinet split, with resignations and reconstruction of the National Government on a Conservative basis, with or without the present Prime Minister as real or nominal head. If the former prevails, Mr. Neville Chamberlain's plans for the reform of taxation will have been hamstrung by his Liberal and Labour colleagues; if the latter, then we are back to the days of party politics once more.

Of the two alternatives, the latter at the moment would seem the more likely, were it not that in politics there is usually the proverbial third course available—the familiar adjustment and compromise between two opposing views. It is clear that something of the kind is now in prospect—in other words, that proposals will be put forward for part of the revenue from tariffs to be devoted to the reduction of direct, and for part to be applied to the reduction of indirect taxation.

### Principle or Expedient?

This is frankly less a question of principle than expediency. It seems certain, or as certain as any political prophecy can be, that the National Government will not last its full term, or anything like it; but it may be con-

venient to postpone the inevitable break-up of the Coalition that is not a coalition for the time being—say until late summer. On that point opinions may legitimately differ.

On the other hand, not even the strongest believer in the principle of Direct Taxation or the Single Tax can dispute that the Income-tax as it stands is excessive, injurious to the purchasing power of the community, and therefore a direct cause of unemployment. In my own view is that the community could, at a pinch, have stood either the additional sixpence or the payment of three-quarters in January; but the two together was too much for even the dogged Briton.

#### Tax Reduction

If that is sound, then the case for alleviation is very strong. Sixpence at least should be knocked off—the 75 per cent. collection next January could be left if necessary—and if the Chancellor has anything left to play with, there should be a reduction of the Beer Duty. At present beer is far too dear, and the working-man in my opinion has a legitimate grievance on that score.

Tobacco also ought to be reduced, but that matter is less urgent, since a good deal of tobacco already comes in at the preferential rate. The standard price of the better brands of pipe tobacco is a shilling or more an ounce, but one sees a good deal of tobacco in the shop-windows at sevenpence or ninepence. This is, of course, double the pre-war price, but this particular grievance seems to me one whose redress can be postponed.

#### The Peace Army

The proposal to establish a Peace Army which would occupy the space between the Japanese and Chinese combatants at Shanghai can only be described as grotesque. Miss Maude Royden and her little band of volunteer enthusiasts are no doubt inspired by the best of motives, but their project would have as little chance of success as the Children's Crusade in the Middle Ages had of conquering the Saracens. The only people that would derive any benefit would be the shipping companies that transported the volunteers, but even they, I am afraid, would find that there was little demand for return tickets.

The truth is that, in the world as it is to-day, force can only be met by force. Whether force

is a satisfactory remedy for force is, and has been a matter of controversy for centuries past, and there is much to be said on both sides of that question. But peaceful persuasion does not in fact convert two rival armies to the laying-down of arms; it simply leads to martyrdom.

#### Ireland

The political situation in the Irish Free State is becoming farcical. Mr. De Valera announces that in no circumstances will he modify his programme, and Labour declares that it will support him to abolish the oath. All very fine, no doubt, but the Senate can hold up such a proposal for eighteen months, while so far as the annuities are concerned, if there are to be negotiations with this country we can put in a counter-claim for an Irish contribution to the war debt.

The truth is that the result of the election was stale-mate, and no party can do anything. Such being the case, I should not be surprised if there were a political interregnum until after the Eucharistic Congress and the Ottawa Conference, followed by another appeal to the country in the autumn upon the straight issue of remaining in the Empire or complete independence. In the interval Mr. De Valera's hands are tied, however much he may proclaim the contrary.

#### Spain

The attempt to effect a Republican concentration in Spain has failed, and the long-awaited speech of Senor Lerroux has left matters exactly where they were before. In short, it has been made clear that the driving-force behind the Republic is Socialism, and that the choice before the country is, as it was in the days of the First Republic, anarchy or monarchy, though some considerable period will probably elapse before this fact is appreciated by the majority of Spaniards.

When this happens there will be a violent swing of the pendulum to the Right, though whether the result of this will be the restoration of the Bourbons or the establishment of a military dictatorship remains to be seen. What is clear is that the end of the anarchy that began last April is not yet in sight, and that things will have to be a good deal worse before there is any hope of them becoming better.

### China and the League

The unexpected bravery of the Chinese soldiers has put the chancelleries and the League of Nations in a dilemma. It had been generally assumed that the Japanese would attain their military objectives without much trouble, and the world's statesmen were devoting their energies to saving their faces in the presence of a victorious Japan. In these circumstances the Chinese resistance has placed Geneva in a distinctly embarrassing situation.

The long and short of the whole business is that the League has never given a thought to justice, but has been wholly concerned with an attempt to keep the peace. The obvious truth that war is often preferable to injustice has never been given a thought at Geneva; or the heroism of a few Chinamen at Woosung would not have made the Powers, collectively and individually, so ridiculous.

### Useless Women

It is rather surprising to read the complaint in the late Sir A. Yarrow's will of "the useless lives led by many ladies at the present day." No doubt the words are literally true—though a feminist would possibly retort that the activities of many men are individually and socially as useless as the inactivities of many women—but surely the implied comparison between past and present does an injustice to the present.

It is true that, owing to labour-saving devices and other forms of commercial enterprise, many women have not enough to do in the house to-day; it is often cheaper to buy in the shop than to make the foods in the home. But on the other hand our grandmothers and maiden great-aunts probably wasted at least as much time in other directions with perhaps less excuse; and Sir A. Yarrow seems completely to have forgotten that a large proportion of women are now actively at work in shops and offices. Their lives may be in the ultimate analysis as those of the men they have displaced, but at least one cannot very well cavil at people who earn their own living.

### The Neutron

The discovery of the Neutron by Dr. Chadwick in his research work at the Cambridge Cavendish Laboratory brings us a little nearer

to the solution of the mystery of the origin of matter. The Neutron appears to be a proton and an electron bound together and consequently minus an electric charge, and this, therefore, seems to represent the first step in the evolution of chemical elements out of electricity.

It is suggested, apparently as a tentative hypothesis, that the Millikan cosmic rays may consist of nothing but streams of Neutrons, but this idea is at the moment more of a chance shot than a reasoned theory. The discovery itself, however, when confirmed, will open up further fields of enquiry. The composition of the Neutron seems to suggest that it is the stable factor underlying matter, and that the numbered elements from Hydrogen and Helium upwards, are relatively unstable.

If that is so, it would be a pointer of considerable importance to cosmic theorists, whose assumptions necessarily depend to a very large extent on the varying durability of matter. But the evidence so far is fragmentary and unsatisfactory, in that it presents no conclusive and logical scheme; and for the time being at best we must remember that suspension of judgment, which is generally a defect in everyday life, is an essential virtue in scientific enquiry.

### Economy

I took so strong a line in demanding measures of economy last year when the cause was "unpopular" (or so the Press and politicians said), that I can sincerely congratulate local authorities on the results now evident. Cuts in expenditure mean cuts in rates. Cuts in rates mean more money for industry. And money for industry means better works and more employment.

### Dr. Woods

The late Bishop of Winchester, whose death at a rather early age was not unexpected after the recent bulletins, was a good but hardly a great man. Speculation is rife as to his successor, but in view of the fact that the Bishop of this See is *ex officio* visitor to more than one Oxford College, I hear the faintest of faint whispers that this time the normal practice should be resumed, and the next Bishop of Winchester should be an Oxonian, and not—as in the case of Dr. Woods—a Cantab.



## THE REVIVAL OF CONFIDENCE

**T**HE past few days have shown a distinct turn for the better in the financial and economic life of the country. It is slight, it is patchy, it is as timid and uncertain as the first steps of an invalid after a long and exhausting illness. But for all that, this sudden improvement in the tone and temper of this sick and struggling England, after two and a half years of crisis and slump and creeping industrial paralysis is a psychological factor of definite and perhaps crucial importance for the nation and the world.

It is not, of course, that we have solved in a night the tangled problems of this topsy-turvy time, in which progress and abundance often produce poverty and scarcity, and success itself carries with it the seed of future failure. But we have suddenly and silently made up our minds that the problems which face us are soluble, and have set ourselves to finding the solution.

The collapse of confidence in the dreary autumn of 1929 was due to the simple fact that this nation, like other nations, suddenly discovered that its accepted values were not real values, and that it had over-estimated both its securities and its services. There followed a long succession of failures in which capital shrank, dividends disappeared, and wages fell; nor are we perhaps even yet at the end of these

spectacular collapses. But we have patiently and doggedly stood up to what seemed like blows of fate, but were in fact only the consequences of our own miscalculations, and if we have now emerged thinner from our economic illness, we shall also emerge stronger in the end from the long struggle with misfortune. We have in fact learned our lesson, and if we were somewhat slow at the start, we have perhaps learned it in the end more thoroughly than the rest of the world.

From this point of view the new tariff, which came into force this week, is symbolic of the whole position. It will not, of course, cure the unemployment problem—though there is good authority for the belief that it will put at least a hundred thousand men back to work within a few months. Equally, the tariff will not, of course, solve those grave questions of over-production which have shaken the capitalist system to its base; nor can it touch the equally serious problem of currency reform which is agitating many of the best minds in the country to-day. Both these matters, which are fundamental to the well-being of the nation, need careful examination and discussion both by experts and the man in the street; but the fact that Britain has at last made up her mind on the tariff problem, after thirty years ebb and flow of political controversy on this issue, is a hopeful augury for the future.

## SCRAP THE LOCAL BODIES

**T**HERE were not, we frankly admit, many actions of Mr. Baldwin's last administration that we should like to see serve as precedents for the National Government, but there is one exception, and it is the abolition of the Boards of Guardians. That measure, in our opinion, pointed the way which we sincerely trust will soon be followed by our present rulers. Half the reforms which are urgently needed to-day are held up owing to the existence of a number of local bodies whose powers for good are extremely limited but whose capacity for evil is almost unbounded. Schemes for the regulation of transport or the control of traffic, drainage proposals, and plans to combat coast erosion are continually being held up, and even abandoned owing to the necessity of securing the approval of half a hundred councils among whom unanimity is almost unknown.

We do not, let us make it clear at the outset, favour centralisation on the French model. But there is a happy mean between the British system of local government and that of our neighbours. What useful purpose, for example, is served by the innumerable Parish Councils, Rural District Councils, and Urban

District Councils that cover the country, and what do they accomplish that the County Council cannot do just as well?

What is true of the country is equally true of London. The great cities of Birmingham and Liverpool are administered by one body, but the capital enjoys the expensive luxury of a council for each borough in addition to the London County Council.

The long and short of the matter is that our local government areas no longer correspond with modern needs. First the railway, and then the motor-car, created a demand for larger administrative units, and that demand has never been met. The result is that the wheels of progress are clogged by the existence of costly and ineffective bodies that merely get in the way. In actual fact it is by no means certain that the counties themselves constitute large enough areas for local government purposes, but if we were merely reduced to them, it would be a step in the right direction. In these circumstances we urge the Government to take the bull by the horns, and to introduce a bill of which the guiding principle shall be the maxim of the late Lord Fisher—"Sack the lot."



## HOW TO SOLVE THE TRAFFIC PROBLEM

BY COLONEL MERVYN O'GORMAN, C.B., Vice-Chairman of the R.A.C.

(The well-known authority on traffic problems, whose name has been put forward as a possible Traffic Dictator).

**C**HAOS still reigns in the traffic on the road. Month by month, and year by year, it is becoming obvious that the tangle grows worse instead of better.

Any effective growth of traffic on the main roads serves to increase the congestion in the big cities. Take, for example, the traffic on the London to Bath highway, which was measured and found to have increased 137 per cent. in six years. The increase at the 39 measuring points inside London during six years has been only 38 per cent. This alone shows that London is already being strangled, for under normal conditions one would expect the country road increase to be less than that in the capital.

Consequently, London's wealth cannot be as productive as it should be. Not long ago, the Manager of the General Omnibus Company stated that if he could increase the speed of his vehicles from the present average of eight to ten miles per hour he would be able to take 100 omnibuses off the road: thus reducing congestion, giving the same service more efficiently to the same number of passengers, and saving £100,000 a year! If this is true of one company, we may be sure that analogous saving could be effected by almost every type of vehicle user.

The real trouble lies in the fact that the country in general, and London in particular, is trying to run a twentieth century system of road transport under an eighteenth century form of control. In London no fewer than 120 separate authorities at present control the highways. One such a body at, say, Putney Bridge or Marylebone, may veto a vital by-pass, or adopt regulations which gravely affect the traffic at London Bridge or the Borough, and these authorities have power to do this in the teeth of the Minister of Transport. These many and various authorities are all elected on behalf of different sectional or local interests, often at different times. This means that supposing 50 (of the 120) have been converted to appreciate some important general scheme, all or most of them will be out of office before the remaining 70 can be won over.

Bad as are the evils of divided authority they are aggravated by the purely sectional interests represented by all concerned in the traffic tangle. Pedestrians, motorists, tramway authorities, owners of horse-drawn vehicles, and transport companies, are each playing a lone hand to further their particular ends. It is impossible for even so efficient and respected a body as the L.C.C. to be regarded as impartial. Everyone knows that it is an important part of the L.C.C.'s job to make tramways pay their way.

To take an even more striking case, the Police Force itself, necessarily takes a one-sided interest in road traffic—the diminution of the number of accidents. The policemen on point duty might find themselves censured for a 5 per cent. increase of accidents by a public unable to appreciate the relevance of the fact that they might have increased the traffic flow by 50 per cent.

London is a lunatic city as far as its traffic is concerned. It is like a child so protected by its parents from the buffets of life that its effectiveness as a citizen of the world becomes nil. No one scheme, however good in itself, can be effectively married to the larger plans to which it should contribute while such a regime lasts. Any plans for constructive work are equally bound to fail through having too sectional an objective—as witness the Charing Cross Bridge fiasco.

Many people are already asking, "Do we need a Traffic Dictator, with full power to deal with the situation as he thinks best?" I do not believe that any one man could be found or should be asked to cope with the problem. For one thing, it is too multitudinous in its aspects; for another, the British are not minded towards a dictator and he would be powerless without the voluntary bowing of the popular will to his behest on a subject in which every coroner, pedestrian, magistrate and driver considers himself an ultimate authority. Such one man power would bring us no nearer to uniting the different traffic interests in the public-spirited co-operation which is necessary.

But the unification of traffic control and road lay-out for London is not impossible. A solution, as I see it, consists in recognising that road transport is a great wealth-producing industry, serving and fertilizing other industries. It should be controlled as any other business concern or big company is controlled by a body of salaried directors for the whole of Greater London.

This Board should be chosen for integrity, economic and technical knowledge. The men should be as independent as the Governors of the Bank of England of interest in any class of traffic unit or any local parochial interests. The business would be handled for the Board by a Managing Director with probably three immediate subordinates. Ultimately the Board would be responsible to the shareholders—the public; but the Managing Director and his three sub-chiefs would each in his own sphere be as much of an autocrat as any factory manager. The highway rates would accordingly be paid into a single pool and would be supplemented from the Road Fund in support of the more generalised schemes of road making.

The three main sections of management, all co-operating to one and the same end, would be:—

(A) Control of traffic units—vehicles, beasts, pedestrians, hand carts, fairs and movable markets—in fact, whatever moves on the roads and footways. Experiment in control, and the statistical data obtained during control experiments come in to this sub-section.

(B) The foreseeing lay-out of streets, so that, as years go on, they subserve the needs of the traffic units. Demolitions, alterations and maintenance come under this subsection.

In addition to an office of finance and accountancy, and an æsthetic, architectural and antiquarian branch, there must also be at the disposal of the Board a most important auxiliary committee for Scientific Research, with

funds at disposal in the same way that the Aeronautical Research Committee has means for extensive experiments in relation to its advice to the Air Ministry.

To-day there are no data. No one knows how to measure the precise effect on traffic flow, near and remote, of changing the position of a pointsman, or introducing a roundabout or one-way street. No one knows what speed will produce the maximum flow per hour through a fully loaded street. Incredible as it may seem, there are not even adequate official statistics of the causes of fatalities. To-day, it is impossible to experiment on traffic control with anything like the necessary freedom.

To take an example of a possibly useful experiment. I suggest that it may be possible to double the effective width, of say, the Clerkenwell Road solely by regulating the spacing of vehicles—a cheap equivalent for the millions which would be spent in widening it. I have proposed that the preliminary experiment be made with hired taxicabs in an empty country road. Why is it not made?

The reasons are delightfully instructive. Firstly, there is no group of scientific men to do such work in any relevant Government office. Then there is no money anywhere to pay for experiments of that kind, to hire taxis and photographic apparatus and men to do the

traffic control. There is no money for making propaganda to local highway authorities or compensating riparian landowners for the inconvenience of having their road closed. Nor is there any guarantee that the experiment if successful would serve any useful purpose, since there is no money and indeed no authority for inducing (by propaganda and mobile police) the traffic units in the Clerkenwell Road to use the results proved by the experiment to be valuable (if so proved).

Let us consider for a moment the capital of the Industry of Road Transport in its new guise of a great industrial company. Measured by the total value of the fixed and movable plant of this industry (Roads and Vehicles) it could not be put at less than twenty thousand million sterling for Greater London. In roads alone, Greater London, with one quarter the population of England may possess as much as 200 millions sterling. A highly technical business of this kind cannot be run without research funds and publicity funds. In the light of these figures, are we to regard the expenditure of, say, £10,000,000, as a large or a small annual capital outlay to bring our permanent structure progressively up to date?

Such an investment would earn its interest and repay itself in the course of years.

### THIS WEEK'S ARGUMENT

## SHOULD CHILDREN GO TO THE FILMS?

YES, BY PATRICIA MELVILLE.

**F**ILMS are not harmful to children. The London County Council recently carried out an exhaustive investigation on the subject, and came to that conclusion, but as the mother of three film-loving children between the ages of 7 and 14, my mind was made up long before the report of that august body was issued.

The L.C.C. did the job with characteristic thoroughness. No less than 21,000 children were examined by teachers and inspectors as to their mental and moral reactions to the films they had seen, and the result was an almost complete vindication of the harmless effect of the cinema. Furthermore, the Consultative Committee, recently set up by the Home Office, declared that "local authorities have no mandate to usurp the right of parents to decide what films their children shall or shall not be allowed to see."

I said "almost complete vindication" because the one evil found was that some children are frightened by certain films. In those cases I consider the parents were at fault. Had they taken the trouble to find out what the films were about before allowing their children to see them, the evil would have been averted.

This home censorship of films is the most obvious way to deal with the matter. In the case of my own family, and, indeed with most of their school-fellows, which I believe is a fairly average way of doing things, we go through the very able criticisms of films to be found in every Sunday paper. My husband and I decide on a film or films, for the following week, and talk it over with the children: it is all part of an exciting game, in

NO, BY BRYAN BROUGHTON.

**L**OCAL authorities have recently raised anew the old question as to whether children should be allowed to see "A" films, provided they are accompanied by an adult, and one suburban council has had the courage to risk the taunt of Puritanism by resolutely setting its face against a general practice which has long made the present method of classifying films an utter farce. It is obviously illogical that the mere presence of parents or friends should enable children to see even mildly sophisticated films which have not been passed for universal exhibition, that it is hard to see how anyone not actively interested in the film trade can defend the custom, unless influenced by purely selfish motives.

But even assuming that the law prohibiting children from seeing pictures passed by the censor "for adults only" were rigidly enforced throughout the country, this would be only tackling the fringe of the problem. There is little doubt that one of the first acts of a British Mussolini would be to ban the entry of all American "talkies" into this country, and also to place the cinema strictly out of bounds for all persons under the age of sixteen. What a storm of hysterical indignation would sweep the land! The childish resentment of the Israelites at being deprived of their "few pleasures" would pale beside it in comparison. But I believe that the result of such a superficially "kill-joy" policy would amply justify it, and that the querulous cries of the opposition would ultimately prove but a storm in a teacup.

When every due allowance has been made for the tendency in most educational and magisterial circles to

YES.

## SHOULD CHILDREN GO TO THE FILMS?

NO.

which anticipation plays a prominent part. My children go to a cinema once a week, sometimes twice, which coincides with the average attendance found by the L.C.C. in their investigations, and are quite content to abide by our decision.

In favour of children visiting cinemas, the Consultative Committee found that "there is no doubt from an educational point of view the minds of some children are definitely quickened." I wish they had said "the minds of all children." In the cinema the child leaves its slum, or prosaic suburb, and travels far beyond the country farm, or seaside town it visits annually for a day or a fortnight. Africa, India, Japan, China, the South Sea Islands with their teeming millions, strange dwellings, and still stranger customs are no longer dull "geography" lessons to the modern child. Progress in this country, and other parts of the world, is followed by eager young eyes and minds; the opening of mighty dams, the bridging of impassable rivers, the conquest by man of land, sea, and air—all are shown to the child for a few pence. Not only does the child see and appreciate the wonders of modern civilization, the marvels of worlds beyond its limited horizon, it learns something of the world's joys and sorrows, its rewards and punishments, the good and evil there is in it, and last, but not least, its temptations. If the parents have chosen wisely, the temptations are not too much in evidence. The British Board of Film Censors in their report for 1931 has shown us how they waged war against sex films, and have issued a warning that they intend to be even more stern during the present year.

To the critics who put forward the time-worn argument used by uneducated people in the police courts where young delinquents face a magistrate: "It was the pictures—done it!" I feel inclined to use my late grandfather's comment (when he disagreed with anything) "Bah! and Pish!" For that is all the reply his argument merits. A child's mind is receptive, and its actions largely imitative, but in the vast majority of cases the imitation forthcoming is of a noble nature. Even the youngest of us prefers to be a little hero. When a youngster warns people of a fire, drags a playmate from a canal, or saves life and property in other ways, does he or she argue: "I saw young X do it on the pictures?" No, of course not—but all the same young X probably did such a praiseworthy thing, and the child hero or heroine of real life has remembered it, and is modelling his action on such an incident. Then why use the bad influence argument to excuse lack of parental control, and probably inherited vice?

Apart from their educative value—and I imply every sense of the word—cinemas keep children happy, warm, interested, amused, and out of mischief for any thing up to three hours a day. The new regulations make them "safe as houses," and the fear of accidents where children might otherwise be playing in the streets is no longer with their elders. Find the parents who would not be grateful for those mercies. Let the film censors carry on the good work they are doing now, and let parents wisely and firmly start where the censors left off, and our cinemas—more than they are to-day—will be quite fit places to take children.

make the "pictures" the scapegoat for every modern delinquency of childhood, from the mildest escapade to serious crime, the baneful effect of the cinema upon the unformed mind of children remains startlingly apparent. The "talkies" (if they hail from Hollywood) corrupt their speech; many undoubtedly have a bad moral effect, especially upon girls, who develop mentally much more quickly than boys; the best give them an excitement which is not necessarily unhealthy, but definitely unnatural, and a pitifully unreal outlook upon life; they all vitiate any budding capability of appreciating the art of real drama.

Why do nine children out of ten prefer the "pictures" to any suitable play? Because they receive the false impression that they are getting more for the money's worth. The days when it was a "treat" to be taken to see a play have long since passed away and one rarely sees a child at the theatre to-day. The fantasy of the cinema far outstrips the natural limitations of the more solid theatre and hurtles them inconsequently hither and thither making the wildest lies of the "movie" camera seductively palatable and believable.

Recent events in the far East have proved beyond doubt that the indiscriminate exhibition of Western films to savage races has irreparably damaged the reputation of the white man and done incalculable harm in fostering a spirit of unrest. And specialists in child psychology are agreed that nearly all children, at a certain stage in their development, have much in common with the savage! The colour of their skin, and the traditions and environment handed down through a relatively short period of civilization is not enough to guarantee their immunity from similarly subversive influences to which they have only been subjected for a bare quarter of a century.

But surely, it will be asked, it should be possible to discriminate between films and films? Why not provide special films for children? The value of the film as an aid to education is gradually being recognised! The answer is that, unless specifically intended as a lesson, it would almost certainly be a form of punishment to force any child to sit through such a performance. Every "thriller" must have an element of blood-lust, and how would the best film "comic" fare at the box office without an occasional lapse into the "high-lights" of an obviously intentional vulgarity? What boy, worthy the name would voluntarily visit an emasculated film of the "uplift" type? I can still remember how in the old days of the "silent screen" at Oxford, the appearance of an "Instructional" or "Nature" film was greeted with restiveness, punctuated by shouts of derisive laughter by us undergraduates. And human nature does not change.

It is a case that calls for no half-measures, no namby-pamby compromises. Until the public taste enforces a purer, saner form of entertainment, children should certainly not be allowed to go to the pictures under any circumstances whatever. And now I must run through the papers to find a "really good" film to which I can safely take a small Public School friend of mine during the Easter Holidays!



## PAGAN ENGLAND

By L. F. RAMSEY.

**M**AURICE HEWLETT who remained to the end of his days an idealist of village life yet recognised one of its fundamentals: that Custom is the law of the village and says that what you did the day before yesterday is sanction for doing it the day after to-morrow. Rural England remains pagan at heart

Even the worship of the old heathen gods continues in the reverence shown to certain trees. You may notice, for instance, elders growing in most inconvenient places, in front of a window or out of a wall, yet here in Sussex I have been gravely told that to cut down elder would bring suffering and disaster. Now elder was sacred to Pan: Pan-pipes were made of its wood.

Tamarisk grows along our southern coast, but you never see a villager gathering tamarisk. No villager would allow it to be brought into the house. You never see tamarisk hedges properly pruned unless they grow in the gardens of foreigners, i.e., people from another county. Now tamarisk was a holy tree when Osiris was worshipped in Egypt. It was the tree that overshadowed his sepulchre and the chest containing his body was said to have been found by Isis lodged in its branches when it was driven ashore by the waves. And as a holy tree the tamarisk is regarded by Sussex natives who have never heard of Osiris.

There are other trees and plants which must never be brought into the house if you would avoid sudden death, and these are not peculiar to Sussex alone. In many parts of rural England, there is a firm belief that hawthorn blossom will cause death if it is brought indoors.

Tree worship survives in many forms. The decorating of our houses and churches with holly at Christmas time is an instance. So is that Devonshire custom of wassailing the apple trees at Christmas, and that other West Country rite of burning an ash faggot on Christmas Eve.

The belief in a power of evil working is as old as time. We may call it superstition but there it is and it is ingrained in man. I watched an old man, who had just cut a small boy's hair, gather up all the cuttings most carefully and bury them.

"Why do you do that?" I asked.

He laughed a little shamefacedly.

"They say if the birds was to get hold of the hair while they're nesting, the boy 'ud have headaches all the time the eggs was hatching out," he replied.

In the loft of an old farmhouse, occupied by the same family for hundreds of years without change of name, many interesting objects came to light when the last of the name died. Among these was an onion stuck all over with cloves. It was wrapped in a paper on which something had been written, but the ink had faded.

In museums, you can sometimes see a dried pig's heart stuck full of pins in similar fashion and the object was apparently the same with either onion or heart: to wish ill to some person, in the belief that by sticking pins or cloves, representing nails, into the object, harm would be worked to their internal organs.

This is on the same principle as the burning of people in effigy or the making of a wooden image of a person to whom one wished harm and maltreating it. If instances of these have occurred within modern times, the secret has been well kept. Indeed, the essence of all black magic is secrecy and many actions which are commonly practised pass unnoticed for want of observers to interpret them correctly.

It is not suggested that those who perform these actions know the significance of what they do. They are automatic, descending from one generation to another. For instance, if a person sits staring into the fire, it is customary for a countrywoman to turn a coal or log with the poker or tongs. This, though she does not know it probably, is to break the power of the evil eye.

Instinctive, too, not only to countryfolk is the touching of wood to avert the ill-effects likely to follow boasting. This fear of the envy of the gods goes back to pagan times when the gods were believed to be jealous not only of man but of each other. It is expressed sometimes in terms of Christianity when a mother, having lost her child, exclaims:

"Ah, I loved him too much and so God took him!"

The powers of evil seem to have a special design against pigs, according to the countryman. You will seldom find a pigstye without a horseshoe nailed over it, the end pointing upwards. This represents the horns of the devil and is to keep him away. I have also seen a bottle tied over a pigstye, into which the evil spirit might enter rather than into the pig, and sometimes a bunch of rosemary tied above piggy's door.

I have often been told that you can't give medicine to a pig. If he is ill, there is no cure for him but the knife. And in spite of the unclean condition under which swine sometimes live they never suffer from parasites, I am told, nor is there such a thing as a pig's flea.

Now the pig was sacred to Demeter. Frazer tells us that is the reason why Jews were forbidden to eat its flesh. The many superstitions belonging to the pig have their foundations in pagan times.

Another animal about which there are many rural superstitions is the hare, used by the ancient Britons according to Cæsar, for purposes of divination. When Boadicea captured Londinium, killing 70,000 Romans and their allies, she is said to have had a hare concealed in her bosom and to have let it go before the battle, when by its windings and turnings it showed the army which way to attack.

Various pagan gods were said to assume the form of hares and to this day, every countryman believes it unlucky if a hare crosses his path and every fisherman and sailor thinks it unlucky to mention a hare while at sea.

It is impossible to convince the countryman of the harmlessness of grass snakes or of their usefulness in the garden. Snakes and slow worms are to them what serpents have been since the days of Medusa, the symbol of evil. As such, a snake is stamped upon or otherwise

maltreated, even though it is nothing but a harmless slow worm.

Closely connected with these pagan beliefs is the use of strange animals and reptiles as medicine. Even to this day, when the doctor fails to cure an obstinate case of whooping-cough quickly enough, some old dame will advise the administering of a roasted mouse. In living memory, a sole fresh out of the sea has been applied to the chest of an infant suffering from the same complaint, when medical remedies seemed to be failing. I have heard of a mother endeavouring to cure "thrush" by getting an infant to suck a frog which she held by the hind leg. Now to meet a frog is commonly considered a good omen. Frogs were used in the days of Pliny to cure madness in dogs and in the love potions administered in the middle ages, frogs inevitably formed an ingredient.

To the despair of district nurses, spiders' webs are

still placed occasionally on bad open wounds. Extraordinary and repulsive "cures" for consumption are still sometimes used. I myself have known a woman swallow several live snails in the belief that this would effect a cure for the tuberculosis from which she suffered and live millipedes have also been swallowed for the same complaint.

The origin of another country's "cure" for consumption does not suggest a pagan origin but it is probably very ancient. It is to follow the plough in a field that has lain fallow!

Superstitions connected with bees are many. The bee was sacred to Diana and Ceres and beekeepers must tell their bees of all their joys and sorrows. If a death occurs in the house, the bees must be told otherwise all the bees will die before the end of the year. I know that this is practised in 1932 and that belief in its truth is strongly held among beekeepers.

## IN DISPRAISE OF EDUCATION

By G. E. G. CATLIN.

FOR a century we have been spending our time endeavouring to destroy the spontaneity of the mind of children. At first we were content to stop with the three "Rs" which had a direct practical excuse in enabling boys to read instructions, to count their money and to write to their young women. We were not content with this. It was inconsistent with democracy and with the great plan to educate the voters that they might know where India was and how Bengalese might best be governed and whether a protectionist tariff would, by the rules of political economy as expounded by Mr. Mill, raise the price of bread. We felt the urge towards the broader and the higher education. We were carried away by it. In the end our wise men decided to impart to all the young of these islands a tincture of the professional training designed for medieval clergymen with certain improvements inspired by the antiquarian discoveries of the fifteenth century. We have called this system universal education.

What has been the result? I do not for a moment wish to deny that a human being uninformed is little better than a savage. Indeed a twentieth century European uninformed, being without all that traditional information which a savage has, would be more stupid and brutish than one. Nor do I suppose that the factious information, miscalled education, which the schools chiefly impart is any longer chiefly the dates of the Kings of England—or even those of Israel and Judah—or the names of the rivers of Ireland. I do not underestimate the high importance of a sound intellectual discipline such as may perhaps be given by training in mathematics to those who have the fortune to be gifted with a capacity for that study. What I do insist is that a lack of clearness of view concerning our aim in education has resulted in much of that education being actually damaging to certain qualities of the mind, although to those qualities least significant in the opinion of persons peculiarly endowed with the schoolmaster temperament.

The criticism does not apply only to the elementary schools. I recently met a young lady of no small talent

who may reasonably be expected to become in due time a journalist of distinction. At present she is destined to spend four years in our senior university pursuing a course of study compounded of philosophy and of the history of the ancients, strangely named "more humane letters." I cannot imagine, for her particular gifts, what worse fate could befall her. This course of study involves, first, the mastery of Latin and Greek and, then, a prolonged subjugation to the discipline of analytic philosophy. The distinctive virtues of the study of Greek and Latin, among languages, are supposed to be that it inculcates accuracy in the course of the endeavour to master their complicated grammar and that it instils a sense for good style.

Both claims are, in the fashion meant, almost certainly wrong. Every testimony of psychology is to the effect that accuracy acquired in one field, such as that of languages, is not automatically transferable to another field such as logic, or artistic observation or engineering skill. And no style is more calculated to damn a modern writer with his public than one modelled on the flowing periods of Cicero or the terse allusiveness of Tacitus or indeed governed in any way by the spirit of complicated syntax characteristic of the tongues of classical antiquity. The only educational argument in favour of these languages, except for a professional philologist is that they are difficult: mere difficulty, however, seems to be scarcely a choice recommendation in any subject prescribed as the substance of education of youth.

It is also sometimes suggested that these classical studies offer a delicate and indirect way of introducing the young to "life." Upon this the only fit comment is that, in circumstance and substance, civilisation has changed a little since the days of Homer as it has since those of Beowulf and that if we look for mentors in the art of life we really might find other masters than Scaliger and Dr. Porson for all their study of these tongues. To follow this preliminary blundering course of study of literature obscured by intentional obstacles our great university in its wisdom (and, compared with most in-

stitutions of higher learning, its wisdom is indeed great and liberal) provides a course intended to develop highly the faculty of intellectual criticism in those who possess it and to humiliate those who do not possess it. This faculty indeed, in academic halls, is regarded as almost synonymous with reason itself. The result of a successful training is a species of dogmatism which rejoices to stand on its head, not asserting but only waiting for some god-given chance devastatingly to deny, leaving others to build and only waiting to pull down, confounding the untrue with the ill-expressed, sterile in itself and blighting in its effects.

Such an education in the better kind produces a gentle scepticism which regards with satisfaction that limited and specialised experience about which alone few observations may be tentatively made without fear of immediate demolition by the critic. In the worse kind of man it leads to a curmudgeon intellectual insolence, whereby he defends his own private prejudices by showing that no one can prove their contrary. Either way the imagination and the true creative faculty, which rests on intensity of experience and genius in the association of ideas, may be hampered, dulled or destroyed. The excuse is made that those who have imagination will have it under any conditions; that at least our education, if it does not encourage the most important mental gifts, cannot be proved actually to destroy them. Some victims at least survive our wonderful mental surgery. How fortunate, yet, are those who are not educated. . . .

In all fields of formal education—not the “highest” only, nor only the elementary—there is the same tendency to blunt the intensity of discipline and to substitute a second-hand, clammy, viscous body of experience called “educational knowledge” for that experience which is, and is consciously recognised as being, one’s very own. The critical philosopher, at the top of the tree, at least has the merit of being aware of what he is doing. He is not interested in sharpness of direct experience—in everything which makes an artist or a poet or even a vital personality—but in his own particular body of professional knowledge (called epistemology) which is the indirect experience of knowing how he knows and of doubting whether he knows what he knows.

The little schoolmasters on the lower branches of the tree have not even the excuse of knowing that they are aiming at a deliberate detachment; they merely don’t know what dried-up, humourless little wooden cones they be. And poor dupes are so far taken in by all this second-hand body of ready made experience that the chief object of their lives comes to be to acquire it.

I do not wish to be mistaken. I have nothing but contempt for the man who has a contempt for knowledge. Nothing is cheaper than demagogic stuff about the sound heart of the people—as if any man had driven an engine or directed a bank, much less a people, with his heart. I have an exaggerated respect for experts. I do not believe that a country can be governed by men ignorant of all study of economics and politics. And I am aware that economics and mathematics and mechanics are built up as generalisations from other people’s experiences—experiences which it would be inconvenient and imbecile to endeavour to confirm directly on each occasion.

I know quite well that some people are able to think

better than others, that there is an aristocracy of intelligence just as there is an aristocracy of good painters and of good musicians. The logical arguments in favour of a government by the intelligent, in favour of the direction of society by the intelligent, are almost insuperable. And yet this idea is, and apparently always has been, instinctively repugnant to mankind. If we analyse that repugnance we discover the secret of it in objection to a complacent form of snobbery, the most oppressive that exists because the most plausible. It is not true that the only desirable form of intelligence is that produced by a protracted education.

The difficulty is more profound. More is involved than a fight between insurgent intelligence and an education, overbearing in unwarranted prestige, which guards the plaster-images of the ancestors and lulls by the memory of past victories the intellectual indolence of man so that we become not Darwins but Darwinians, not Platos but Platonists, not Galileos—but Gallios. The real danger lies in the perversion of those most favoured in natural talent and best able to profit by wise education. The danger lies, not chiefly in the suppression by authority of insurgent intelligence—that fight was fought out at the Renaissance and again during the Enlightenment: it is a perpetual fight: but it is not an unsuccessful one—but in the misunderstanding of the place of intelligence itself.

Intelligence is not reason. For reason, the moderator of life, is able to approve of much and to encourage what is of a quality quite other than intelligence. A rational and wise education is quite other than only an intellectual one. No more is it true that all wisdom lies in the cultivation of the skill of the hands. A civilisation of skilled hand workers would be as boring and dead-rotten as a civilisation of unmixed intellectuals, great understandings and little men. It does, however, mean that there is great wisdom in the cultivation of quick and fine perception, for who has it not is a maimed man and will soon be a half-dead one. It means that the imagination is as valuable for creation, which is man’s peculiar and most humane gift, as is intellect. And imagination like the sense for music or painting can and should be trained—and cannot be trained by men without imagination and vitality, since imagination is the vitality of the mind. That is why many people whom the pandits call uneducated are, for the high purpose of civilisation and good living, far more wisely educated than they. There is deep wisdom in profound, controlled, rationally controlled but unrepressed and unpoisoned emotions such as are the best warranty of strength and happiness and the condition of a fearless and straightforward character.

The task of an educator is not simply to be a drill-master of the intellect who teaches one how to think. That is useful—even necessary—but superficial. Until, however, educators, who are the spiritual directors of our world (for who else are these directors?) recognise it as part of their task to enable us to know those gifts within ourselves by which we can see and mould the world without ourselves, until our spiritual directors are poets and the fathers of poets, I see little hope that it will not still remain true that many simple and uneducated men have more to teach the formally educated than ever was dreamed of in their prig philosophy.



# A SATURDAY DICTIONARY

## THE PRICE LEVEL

IT is a familiar axiom of physical science that water always seeks the lowest attainable level; and similarly it always seems to the producer of goods or services that prices in the world of commerce or economics also seek the lowest attainable level. Since, on the other hand, the consumer often maintains that prices are raised or even rigged against him by the producer and/or the distributor, it is evident that the former cannot be true. The fact is that neither statement is correct.

Prices of goods and services tend towards a mean; and that mean-level is regulated in the main by supply and demand. But the equilibrium between a physically variable supply and a psychologically variable demand is necessarily unstable, and the oscillations of the price-level (which can be disturbed by many remote and seemingly irrelevant factors) have never been very successfully defined by economists.

Where demand is constant (as in the case of staple food-products) a slight shortage in supply will drive up prices at a greater mathematical ratio than the actual shortage warrants; but when on the other hand there is some excess of supply over demand, the fall in retail

price lags behind the fall in wholesale price, and it may never reach the public at all.

At the present day, for example, the fall in the wholesale price of many goods sold in packets over the counter has not been passed on to the consumer, who instead of paying less for his purchase is fobbed off with a coupon or the promise of some trumpery present for a number of coupons.

The tendency to lower prices to the mean level between supply and demand is thus often frustrated by concerted trade action to keep them above that level. By contrast, when the situation is reversed, and the prices rise above the mean level on account of a slight excess of demand over supply, they are apt to rise so sharply that there is a public outcry, and the State often steps in to prevent the exploitation of the consumer by the producer or distributor, or both in combination. The attempts, however, by the State to restrict or regulate prices in the interest of the consumer have seldom been successful, as the experience of 1914-18 showed; the result is apt to be that the maximum price fixed becomes the minimum price, or in extreme cases that the foods are withdrawn from sale altogether.

## STORY

### THE TRAMP WITH A VISITING CARD

By R. C. HUTCHISON.

THE Comte de Morfieu, a paddle steamer owned by a French company, is named after a Provencal of the fifteenth century. The passage of this single vessel constitutes what is known as the Marseille-Egée service. A service it cannot properly be called, but in a way the Morfieu is a convenience. Just when you have missed the regular steamer and resigned yourself to perhaps fifteen more hours on a very small and quite uninteresting island, the Morfieu, which observes no time-table, will often come puffing into view.

I was in just such a position in September, and for (I think) the fourth time in my experience this happened. I knew that salvation was nigh directly I saw a cloud of black smoke above the green-grey of a long headland. I was on board an hour later.

Nearly all the passengers—about a hundred, as we had a full load—were congregated on the port side, the wind coming mainly from starboard. I found a seat by squashing myself between two peasant women, who were, I thought, holding more than their share, and sat there in extreme misery; unable to read as my hands were too cold to hold a book; with no one to talk to, because those all round me were talking in languages which I know only as they are spoken in the various capitals.

By scanning the new horizon as far as the prominent persons of my two neighbours would permit, I presently discovered that I was not, as I thought, the only Englishman on board. About eight paces away, propping

himself against the deck-rail with one arm, stood a man whose face, bearing, and clothes might all have been marked "Made in London." From his worn brown boots to his faded bowler hat he was shamefully shabby, but between his square chin and the place where his tie should have been he wore a splendid butterfly collar; a very dirty collar, true, but as stiff and uncomfortable as any barrister's. He was engaged in demonstrating some ingenious card tricks to a man whose back was towards me but the colour of whose skin indicated a Spaniard. The Englishman was trying to suggest that his friend would find it advantageous to put his interest in the tricks on a pecuniary basis. This the Spaniard could not or would not understand. He could hardly be blamed, as he was being addressed alternately in broad cockney and in excruciating French. "Porkwar non compren?" the Englishman was asking repeatedly, and with growing exasperation.

It did not take him long to see me, and he came over at once.

"Nice to meet a fellow-countryman!" he remarked, "no use for all these dagoes."

"I made a how-do-you-do noise."

"Are you at all interested in cards, sir?" he asked, coming to the point with laudable speed.

I stated that I did not play cards, that I hated all indoor games, and that I did not, to tell the truth, know the difference between a Jack and a Spade. He looked glum.

"I could show you some clever tricks," he suggested.

I intimated with considerable firmness that conjuring tricks of all kinds, and especially card-tricks, were anathema to me. In spite of this discouragement he evidently decided that a card-abhorring Englishman was preferable to a wooden-headed foreigner who couldn't understand his own language.

"I ought to introduce myself!" he said, and from his pocket he produced a card. "You can keep it," he remarked, handing it to me with some pride, "I had a hundred of 'em done at Marsay."

It was on the large side for a gentleman's card, being roughly equal in area to a postcard. My friend's name was printed right across the middle in huge, red block capitals. The name was "Sir Henry Norton."

I said, as gravely as possible, "I'm delighted to meet you, Sir Henry."

"Not at all!" he said briskly, and after the manner of true aristocracy he started to talk very rapidly in a man-to-man tone, showing clearly that the social differences which a title implied were not to come between us. I have seldom been put to my ease so vigorously. He told me about his many wanderings on the face of the globe, how he had seen strange things in India, and men lying in the streets of Port Said with knives in their gullets. Evidently he knew his Kipling.

As soon as I had a chance to interrupt the flow of reminiscence, I asked him how he came by his title. This, I think, pleased him. In his heart of hearts he had been longing to tell that story.

"King George has got a big heart and a long memory," he said darkly, and paused to let the epigram sink in. "Before the war," he went on, "I was just plain Henry Norton. Well, I did my bit, y'know, same as we all did, y'see, an' I saw a bit o' pretty heavy fighting. But I didn't get no medals to show the kids—not that I've got any kids. Of course, I didn't complain, I knew I'd done my bit, same as the rest. Some of us got the chinketies, some of us didn't. That's how things go, y'see. Matter o'luck, more or less, y'see. Well, I says to myself, never mind, I says. King George won't forget you, I says, he won't let you down. Well, I wasn't far wrong. See here, this is what I came across a few months back."

He dived into his outer pocket again, and brought out a crumpled cutting from the Times. It was a New Year's Honours List; a red line led my eye down the "Knights" section to the name "Henry Norton, for special services to the nation during the Great War."

"It's queer how things happen," he said. "Shouldn't be surprised if I get an invite to one of these garden parties they have at Buckingham Palace, one of these days."

"It's not in the least unlikely," I agreed.

I wonder whether he is still hoping for the opportunity of showing His Majesty a trick or two. I hope, at all events, that no one will disillusion him, for despite his witty profession I think he was simple enough honestly to believe in his title. Sir Harry Norton of Bedfordshire, who happens to be a member of my golf-club, and by whose permission I am able to publish this story, will certainly keep quiet about it.

## THEATRE BY GILBERT WAKEFIELD

*So Far and No Father.* By H. M. Harwood. Ambassadors.

My optimistic expectations with regard to Mr. Harwood's play have been fulfilled; and now that everyone is sufficiently sure of his or her lines to be able to give to the dialogue its proper value, what seemed on the first night a prolonged, and eventually a rather tedious, joke has become a lively and continuously entertaining comedy. I would call it a Farce, if that term were not associated in the public mind with a peculiarly puerile extravagance. There is nothing—well, perhaps that's an exaggeration; there is little that is puerile about "So Far and No Father," which is the product of an adult mind. At the same time, it is not a genuine Comedy—if only for the reason that the frankly incredible story is contrived and the characters mere puppets.

Why, for instance, was that famous actress, Mary Melbourne, so reluctant to reveal to her enquiring children the identity of their father? Simply in order to provide the central situation of the play. He was not, as she assured them, a "disgusting" person; nor had he "deserted" her. On the contrary, he was by far the nicest person in the play—at least, as played by Mr. Graham Browne, he was. And though there is probably no actor on the English stage more unmistakably domestic and marital and obligingly good-natured, nor one less easily associated with the science of ethnology and things of that sort; and though, for these reasons, he was not perhaps the most accurate embodiment conceivable of the character the author had in mind, there can be no question that Miss Melbourne's husband was a pleasant and highly respectable, if absent-minded, English gentleman—a fact which, when it was revealed in the third act, utterly and completely stultified the situations of the previous acts.

Let us assume, however, that the charm and innocence of Mary's husband is simply a *volte-face* contrivance to provide a pleasant ending to the piece. Even so, and assuming that, in her opinion anyway, her husband was disgusting and unmentionable, and thus justifying the amusing situation of Act II, Scene I, the subsequent events of Mr. Harwood's story are purely factitious and arise out of the most daring, not to say impudent, conglomeration of coincidences I have ever met with in the theatre. For in order to provide the father whom her daughter, engaged to be married, is in urgent need of, Miss Melbourne chooses at random a grave in the local cemetery in the provincial town where she happens to be acting that week, and announces that her late, but unlamented spouse is buried thereunder. In fact it is that of a Mr. Sidebottom—oh, Mr. Harwood!—who had had in London as his secret mistress an actress named Mary Melrose, by whom he had become the father of two children, a boy and girl of roughly the same ages as those of whom Miss Mary Melbourne was the mother! The profession, the place, the dates, the offspring and even the names of the two mothers—all are as good as identical.

There is only one term for a play with a plot of this

sort. "So Far and No Father" is a Farce; and the only question which requires an answer is whether the author has contrived it with sufficient cunning, and imbued it with sufficient wit and humour, for its essential nonsensicality to be entertaining. Seeing it for the second time, I found that my faith in Mr. Harwood was completely justified, and that, though the piece is not only on the short side, but repetitive and padded out with irrelevant interludes, the wit and the fluency and the sophistication of the author's dialogue have been equal to the task of making a delightful entertainment out of what, in less expert hands, would almost certainly have turned into one of the world's worst farces.

The actors are now, with one exception, excellent. The exception is Mr. Hermann Grou, whose conception of his part is better than his execution. However, since very few playgoers will be vastly interested in this satirical Strange Interlude, his inadequacy is not of very grave importance. Miss Marie Tempest helps the play enormously, both by an artistic restraint which does much to disguise the impudent improbabilities, and also by characteristic strokes of natural comedy. Mr. Graham Browne is quite perfectly his charming self as the "disgusting" father. Mr. Robert Andrews, relying for his laughs on art instead of on buffoonery, gave a highly intelligent and altogether admirable performance. Miss Margaret Scudamore made Mrs. Sidebottom a genuine, and at the same time an amusing, person; again in her case there was a laudable refusal to over-act. And there were several other good performances, among them those of Miss Mignon O'Doherty, Miss Yvonne Rorie (who must learn, however, to wait before she speaks until the audience has finished laughing) and Mr. Walter Piers. For the admirable matching of the acting to the play, I suspect that a word of commendation is due to the producer, Mr. Graham Browne.

The withdrawal of "Lovely Lady" after four unprofitable performances is ascribed to "unfavourable criticisms"; and a member of the management is reported to have added that "with money so short as it is to-day, you have to be hall-marked 100 per cent. to get the public. If there is even an element of doubt about the new show, they go to the pictures instead"—from which one is forced to the conclusion that, so far from anticipating any "element of doubt" in respect of "Lovely Lady," E.L.K.B. Ltd.—on whose behalf Mr. Laurillard presented it—expected, or at least had hopes, that this Comedy with Music would be "hall-marked 100 per cent." by the critics. I doubt if the members of the Critics Circle have ever before had their taste and intelligence so grossly, if unwittingly, insulted! At the end of the second of its three acts I left the theatre, not yet having heard one joke capable of raising so much as a smile on the face of a child over ten years old, and dejected beyond endurance by the frantic and despairing efforts of the actors to disguise their consciousness of the sheer inanity of the whole thing under a mask of exaggerated joviality which would have been intolerably depressing even in a good farce.

Let me end by strongly recommending two new plays: Mr. A. P. Herbert's "Derby Day" at the Lyric, Hammersmith, and "Below the Surface" at the Prince of Wales's.

## FILMS BY MARK FORREST

*Cameradschaft.* Directed by G. W. Pabst. The Academy.

*Madchen in Uniform.* Directed by Leontine Sagan. The Film Society.

*Forbidden.* Directed by Frank Capra. The New Gallery.

*High Pressure.* Directed by Mervyn Le Roy. The Regal and The London Pavilion.

WHEN I saw "Cameradschaft" a little over a month ago at a private view, I hoped, almost against hope, that the general public would be given an opportunity of seeing this remarkable picture; now, or rather next Monday, the management of the Academy is being courageous enough to present it, and I hope no one will be foolish enough to miss it.

The film is laid in a coal mine the galleries of which run alongside the German-Franco frontier; there is a serious gas explosion in the French mine and, disregarding the frontiers both above and under ground, the Germans go to their rescue. Mr. Pabst, whose best piece of work this is, is concerned to show the real humanity of mankind and his purpose is to prove the comradeship of one man for another, whatever the superficial barriers man himself may have created to thwart this true relationship. The theme is a big one, and, handled by a man of small imagination, the result would have been banal, but Mr. Pabst, studiously avoiding sentimentality, has succeeded in making a strong and vivid picture which should command universal attention and respect.

For those who do not want to trouble themselves overmuch with the implications of the film, there is the drama of the coal mine itself. The workings of this mine are shown with great attention to detail, and the gradual collapse of the galleries, the inrush of water and the onslaught of the gas form one of the finest dramatic sequences yet seen on the screen.

Mr. Pabst is no mere purveyor of words; he knows the art of the cinema, and people should not stay away in the mistaken idea that, because they do not understand French or German, or both, they will not be able to make head or tail of the picture. The story is told in pictures, which is the reason for the cinema, and the dialogue, while serving to heighten the effect, does not at any point oust the camera.

Another German picture was shown in London this week, this time by the Film Society; there is, I am afraid, little chance of the general public getting a glimpse of this. "Mädchen in Uniform" was voted the best picture of last year in a ballot conducted by a German newspaper among the critics of the cinema, and certainly the direction of Miss Sagan is remarkably good. So good is it that one cannot help wishing that a more interesting and pleasing subject had been the object of her direction. The story is that of a girl's school where Manuela, who has just lost her mother, is sent by her aunt. In the desolation of her heart she turns to Fraulein von Bernberg, the only one of the mistresses to show her any sympathy, and the implications of such a friendship form the theme of the picture.



Though she has had a lot of experience in the theatre, this is Miss Sagan's first film, but it is perfectly plain, after a few hundred feet have been run through, that she has joined immediately that select group of directors from whom the cinema acquires its importance. Her work in this picture is of the very best quality, and the acting of the whole cast, especially that of Herthe Thiele as Manuela, is worthy of the direction. If only the subject had not been so arid, one's satisfaction would have been complete.

To turn to the more popular branch of the cinema, the stars from Hollywood, there is not much that is better than ordinary in this week's pictures. The two best new films are "Forbidden" at the New Gallery and "High Pressure" at the Regal and the London Pavilion.

Barbara Stanwyck is starred in "Forbidden," and Mr. Capra, who has written the story of the film as well as directed it, has tried to present the eternal triangle on somewhat different lines from those which are customary. The affair which begins in Havana between Lulu and Bob Grover comes to no happy end, for, on the death of Grover, Lulu, whose whole ambition is to protect the name of the man she has loved from the consequences of their intimacy, makes her final sacrifice on the altar of his reputation by destroying his will, wherein he has confessed the true parentage of his adopted daughter and left the mother half his fortune.

Most people will probably find this variation unsatisfactory, and the sight of Barbara Stanwyck, old, penniless and lonely in the midst of the Broadway crowd—withstanding her sacrifices—unpalatable. Whatever they may think about the story, however, they will enjoy Barbara Stanwyck's acting. She had already given promise of better work in "Ten Cents a Dance," and her performance and characterization here are excellent. Adolphe Menjou in the part of Bob Grover is a surprise and, on the whole a pleasant one. Nevertheless he lacks weight for the part and is much more at home in the airy beginnings of the picture than he is in the dramatic conclusions. The illegitimate daughter of the irregular union is played by Charlotte V. Henry, whose personality is such as to suggest that it will not be long before she is provided with a much better part than this one.

At the Regal and the London Pavilion William Powell is in a much better picture than he has had the fortune to get hold of recently. He is selling rubber, that is rubber which, so he alleges, can be made out of sewage, and the picture moves almost as fast as "Gentleman for a Day," which supports it. English audiences will probably take the film for a satirical exposition, but there is a great deal of truth underlying this apparently preposterous salesmanship. Whether the film is a travesty or not, it is very entertaining and the pace is such that one has not time to be conscious of the weaknesses in the story. William Powell is his suave, unabashed self and, except that the process which he is trying to sell does not exist, is a model of honesty; there is also a very amusing performance by George Sidney as the Jewish financier.

"Gentleman for a Day," which supports it, was recently shown, also in support, at the Plaza, when I drew attention to it. It opens a little slowly, but otherwise is full of good things and the atmosphere of the railway station is excellently caught.

## CORRESPONDENCE

### WHAT IS A JOURNALIST?

SIR,—I am amused to see that the old controversy as to the employment of amateur contributors by the newspapers has broken out again. I do not know exactly what the definition of a journalist may be, but I presume it is a person who writes for, and whose writing is accepted by, the newspapers and periodicals. Whether that person is an amateur or professional appears to me beside the point; and what on earth that has to do with Trade Unionism I fail to see.

The real trouble about journalism is not the status of its contributors, but the imbecility of its editors. I could easily prove my point, but this is, after all, a letter to an Editor.

Fleet Street, E.C.

CONTRIBUTOR.

SIR,—Your reference to the popular Press and its ethics raises a smile of the face of a hard-boiled old journalist such as myself whose first important job of work was doing the A.A.A. Championships at Stamford Bridge in 1889 and going on from that to reporting a Labour leader called Ben Tillett at Starch Green the evening of the same day.

But the situation from the point of view of the practising journalist is a serious one. He sees his job filched from him by some scatter-brain or ex-Labour leader. What a fuss this Labour skate would make if a journalist started to drive a motor van without belonging to the Transport Workers' Union.

S.W.1.

HAMILTON EDWARDS.

### ENOUGH OF THIS FOOLERY

SIR,—The studied insolence of Sir Herbert Samuel's message to the Liberal candidate in the Henley by-election, an avowed opponent of tariffs, has surely opened the eyes of all sound Conservatives in the present Cabinet, and it is their bounden duty to the electors of this country to hound him out of the Government. A fortnight ago you wisely wrote that "Samuel must go," in view of his own personal opposition to the chief policy of the Cabinet which had the support of a majority of its members.

There has been a good deal of controversy as to what this Government was returned for by the electors in October last, but one thing is plain to most people and that is that it was not elected to dismember the Empire, as instanced in the Statute of Westminster, nor to pass Socialistic measures, such as the Town and Country Planning Bill, the London Passenger Traffic Bill, nor even the Wheat Quota proposal, which is nothing more nor less than the nationalization of the milling industry, and will be of little service to the agricultural industry in this country.

Ninety per cent. of Conservative candidates who stood at the last Election were whole-heartedly in favour of the full protection of our industries, and the result of that contest was to return so preponderating a majority of Conservatives that they virtually constitute the House of Commons to-day.

Wallington, Surrey.

ERNEST JAMES.

## NEW NOVELS By H. C. HARWOOD

*The Next Generation.* By J. D. Beresford.  
Benn. 9d.

*Incredible Tale.* By Naomi Royde-Smith.  
Benn. 9d.

*Love is a Flame.* By Mrs. Belloc Lowndes.  
Benn. 9d.

*The Broom Squires.* By Eden Phillpotts.  
Benn. 9d.

*The Single Heart.* By Storm Jameson. Benn.  
9d.

*Leap Before You Look.* By Alec Waugh.  
Benn. 9d.

*Lady Chatterley's Lover.* By D. H. Lawrence.  
Secker. 7s. 6d.

*A Clue from the Stars.* By Eden Phillpotts.  
Hutchinson. 7s. 6d.

It is a curious thing that Mr. J. D. Beresford has never yet been accepted as the most contemporary writer of to-day, Mr. H. G. Wells possibly accepted. Let me try to explain what I mean by that. Mr. Beresford too often writes dully and flatly. The dialogue is at times stilted. The theme is too often obscure. There is no one book signed J. D. Beresford of which it could be said that this within its limits is perfect. Yet his intellectual excitement and fertility are such that one approaches a new book of his, as one approaches a new book of H. G. Wells, with this amount of confidence, that mind and emotion have not unworthily collaborated in its making.

"The Next Generation" presents three young people who are reacting from the bright young things. Drink, sexual promiscuity, and elaborate intrigues do not much interest Susan and Henry and Bill Alexander. Henry is the nastiest prig in modern fiction, and no undergraduate though he might be objectionable in other ways could be quite so objectionable in that way. But Susan is perfect. Her mystical experience is exactly that which girls of that age enjoy. Nor could her love inadvertently released have been given to a better man.

A mystical experience of something that transcends mysticism and becomes religion has rarely been better described. There is, however, something too gritty about it. Priggishness is too common. Too often truths are stiltedly set down. But Mr. Beresford has as always something to express.

"Incredible Tale" is altogether lovely, as lovely as Cinderella and of the same kind. A dumb girl throws from the embankment crumbs to gulls and a witch like elder takes her away. There is some fuss about white emeralds, and an intricate plot. This matters very little, as little as the size of Cinderella's glass slipper. What does matter is the sheer and sweet romanticism of this story. Incidentally, the story is far too slow in its beginning and far too commonplace in its end. But here is beauty, caught as one might catch a gull, hesitant above the Thames. Just as one seems to sink to Ruritanian shores, the frosty strength of Gilda prevails.

Mrs. Belloc Lowndes has carefully juxtaposed two typical young women of the present day. The one is a nice-minded lass who nearly becomes because of her carelessness a murderer. Mrs. Lowndes's uniquely

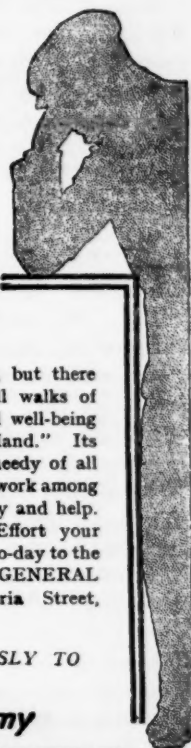
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sinister imagination envelops the commonplace and throws a new light upon the sub-natural. Always everything is so simple, so commonplace, until crime comes in. "She is absurdly like Queen Victoria," said some one to me, and then someone answered: "Yes! If she had Borgia blood in her." "Love is a Flame" is not the best of Mrs. Lowndes's shockers, but it is representative.

Of "The Broom Squires" it is unnecessary to say much. Mr. Phillpotts with unexhausted vitality pours out Wessex dialect and manufactures an interesting story. "All orderly and proper" as Saul says. Mr. Phillpotts has done what he wanted to do and done it very well, nor whatever betide shall I lose the taste for Wessex talk.

That excellent and exhilarating novelist, Miss Storm Jameson, has written again about the same old heroine of whom long ago I should have got tired if Miss Jameson did not keep up to date. The wonder is—not that Miss Jameson writes over and over again the same story of sexual disappointment—but that she does not break away from the small circle of her theme. The same young lady collects the same two husbands. The same ships puff across the background. "The Single Heart" is insecurely supported by its strength and nicety. Miss Jameson persists in plunging the same heroine into the same adventures.

"Leap before you Look" is good. Its author Mr. Waugh has condescended at times to the magazine story, to the short, snappy and be off with it. There is a sort of hang over from that onto this tale of a wife who only began to understand what marriage meant when she had to face its uglier aspects. Faith, a cheap typist, amused herself by pretending that she was rich. Then she became rich. Then she became poor again. These changes of fortune are less important than the strong, mellow commentary of the author.

Well I remember once when shivering with ague in Venice I bought "Lady Chatterley's Lover" and reading those Saxon monosyllables, I wondered whether half of D. H. Lawrence's dark beauty did not reside in his evasion of the obvious. He wandered, he must before he have wandered round the truth. Of the expurgated edition of "Lady Chatterley's Lover" with all the Saxon monosyllables and most of the physiology left out I find it difficult to write anything laudatory. Nothing became Lawrence so well as his enforced allusiveness. And nothing served him better than the obligation put upon him by our laws to write away from, though in parallel terms with, his simple sexuality. This, I know, will not commend itself to many admirers of Lawrence's imagination. But take "Wintry Peacock," take "The Lady-bird." Those flashing and potent tales derive their value from the inability of the author there directly to express his meaning. He wrote poetry because he could not write prose, and the prose that in a more liberal world than this he would have written would have resembled the sort of scrawl made by a certain kind of man on the walls of public lavatories, the sort of scrawl made much to Zola's annoyance by De Maupassant.

"A Clue from the Stars" is a slow, steady, solid tale of murder. Nothing that Mr. Phillpotts writes could be devoid of interest, and he luxuriously entwines the sensational with the sentimental.

## REVIEWS

D.C.L.I.

*The History of the Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry, 1914-19.* Methuen Nebp. 7s. 6d.

WHEN a bibliophile some generations hence endeavours to collect the literature of the World War, even in the English tongue, he will have a prodigious task, and a vast and separate branch of the subject will be the regimental histories of the British Army. Not only are they stores of local knowledge and records of local effort in raising the War Army, as well as of the heroism and sacrifices in the field, but they are astounding pictures of the varying of the British character. It is always a matter for regret that we have not even on such story to tell us of Atkins and his ways with the Black Prince of Henry V. or with Cœur de Lion. We may be quite sure however that they differed but little from those of Atkins and his quarter-bloke in the World War.

The history of the D.C.L.I. by Everard Wyrall, just published through the generosity of subscribers at the accessible price of 7s. 6d., is a very high grade example of its class, well illustrated and beautifully mapped, and has the very distinct advantage of an undercurrent of general war history, besides the story of the Regiment of the Duchy, while H.R.H. himself writes the Foreword. The story of two Regular, three Territorial, four Service and one Labour battalion, make a long one to tell, of intense interest to the people of Cornwall, to those who took part, and to the families of those who fell, written in an extremely readable and at times stirring form. The chapters on the expansion of the Armies alone, is of interest to those who want to know how the wheels went round, while the fact that some battalion of the regiment served in Salonika and in Palestine gives the opportunity for a wider history, than that of corps who served only in the main theatre. The author is to be congratulated on the manner he has performed his task, the Duchy or its history, and the nation on a record which is something different from that of a purely Saxon corps. At the end comes that reminder for future generations, the Roll of Honour and all that their forefathers suffered, not necessarily from their folly, but from a cataclysm that overwhelmed them through no wish of theirs. And the French say better than we do.

Battez le tambour a petits coups bas  
Gravez son noms son numereau.

LT-GEN. SIR GEORGE MACMUNN, K. C.B.

## ITALY IN THE WAR

*The War on the Italian Front.* By Luigi Villari. Cobden-Sanderson. 18s. 0d.

THIS is the first complete work in the English language which deals with the Italian contribution towards the overthrow of the Central Powers, and it should at once take its place as the standard book upon the subject. Signor Villari deals not only with the main front against Austria, but he devotes a good deal of attention to the operations of the Italian troops in France,



Albania and Macedonia: the result is a complete and extremely valuable account of Italy's war effort, and this is enhanced by the inclusion of some excellent maps.

The author is under no illusions as to the extent to which the fighting qualities of the Italian troops have been misrepresented in other countries, and he quotes from Austrian and German sources to prove the importance of the intervention of Italy. In particular, he completely disposes of the fallacy that it was only the arrival of British and French troops that saved the Italian army from total disaster after Caporetto, for he proves conclusively that the front had been re-established on the day before the arrival of the other Allies. Incidentally, the illustrations included in the volume are themselves evidence in Italian favour, for few armies have ever had to wage a long campaign in such difficult country.

A perusal of this book can leave no doubt whatever on the reader's mind as to the services of Italy to the Allied cause. Not only did she immobilize the Austro-Hungarian army, which would otherwise have been used to break through on the Western front, but by the overthrow of that army in October, 1918, she compelled Germany to lay down her arms. Probably the easiest way to appreciate the effort of Italy at its true worth is to picture what would have happened had she remained neutral, or, worse still, come in on the side of her partners in the Triple Alliance. In these circumstances it is a little short of a tragedy that she should have been so unworthily represented at the Peace Conference.

If, as is to be hoped, this work runs into a second edition, the English reader will welcome the addition of a short account of the war service of Signor Mussolini: he is, it is true, shown on one or two occasions in the editorial chair of *Il Popolo d'Italia*, but it is not always realized outside his own country that his pronouncements in that paper during the latter part of the war were the result of a long spell in the trenches on the Carso, where he was very seriously wounded. For the rest, Signor Villari silences all criticism.

CHARLES PETRIE.

### THE GREATEST HAPSBURG

*Emperor of the West. A Study of Charles V.*  
By D. B. Wyndham Lewis. Eyre and Spottiswoode. 8s. 6d.

IT was high time that we had a fresh study of Charles V, and in these pages Mr. Wyndham Lewis has proved himself to be the right man to provide one. There is a great deal in his narrative that challenges the conventional view, for his premise is that the Reformation was a very bad piece of work indeed, but the book should be read even by the most extreme of Protestants, and it must inevitably tend to modify existing opinions concerning both the man and the period with which it deals.

The volume is dedicated to M. Henri Massis, and the author has clearly been profoundly influenced by that great French thinker. The defence of European civilization against disruptive tendencies within and barbarism without was, in the opinion of Mr. Wyndham Lewis, the aim of Charles V throughout his reign, and the author believes that this task is as urgent now as it was in the sixteenth century. That there is much to be said for this attitude goes without saying, but Mr. Lewis

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does not always carry conviction when he is dealing with the religious aspect of the problem. For example, he agrees that the Church stood in need of reform, but he leaves the reader with the impression that had it not been for the Reformation the Council of Trent would never have been convened: in short, that there would have been no reform from within had there not first been reform from without.

The apologia for Charles in secular matters is well-nigh unanswerable, and Mr. Wyndham Lewis shows how the Emperor was hampered at every turn by France, whose policy, then as now, was to proclaim herself the leader of civilized Europe, and then to do everything she could to damage its prospects: in the sixteenth century she allied herself with the Turk, and in the twentieth she makes pacts with the Little Entente and flirts with the Bolshevist. Not the least interesting part of the book, too, is the account of the Emperor's relations with Mary Tudor, upon whom Charles was always pressing wise counsels, though in vain.

In fine, this is a work to stimulate thought, even among those who will least agree with the argument that runs through it. Mr. Wyndham Lewis is certainly provocative, and he clearly has a case, so that those who only know the traditional standpoint should hasten to acquaint themselves with the other point of view, particularly since it may be studied in so delightful a form as the present volume.

#### PORTRAIT OF THE ARTIST

*John Crome of Norwich.* By R. H. Mottram.  
John Lane. The Bodley Head Ltd.  
12s. 6d.

THE mystery of John Crome, round whom our greatest school of landscape painting developed, is surely a subject for the creator of character. For nearly a hundred years he was almost a myth, and it is possible that, had it not been for the imaginative and inquisitive energy of Mr. R. H. Mottram, Crome might have remained to future generations what the great Italian, Giorgione, is to us, a mere abstract creature who brought about a profound revolution in art. I am not unmindful of the various books on Crome published at the end of last century and within recent years, but Mr. Mottram has a distinctive purpose in his study. It is an effort to get at the personality of the artist, to remove the veils of time from his figure, and to restore some aspect of reality, as an expert restorer might remove the dust and varnish of ages from an old picture.

Mr. Mottram was better fitted to do this work than any other writer, because he is not only a Norwich man born within a hundred yards of the place where Crome was born, but has a genuine veneration for the East Anglian scene and a native understanding of the character of its inhabitants. He explains that Crome was an Englishman with a strange and stubborn quality, a modest and verbally inarticulate primitive who developed almost as slowly as the oak trees he painted with such exquisite vision. The youthful promise and spectacular exploits usually associated with genius were not a part of Crome's career. This man was content to be a drawing master for most of the week and to paint for himself on Sundays, and when we read of his happy hours trying to instruct the Gurney ladies of Earham in the art of landscape

painting we can but envy Crome's idyllic tranquillity and security among his Quaker patrons. Not for him the rivalry, the wrangles, the triumphs and despairs of those who suffer from the folly of greatness, in the metropolis. His occasional journeys abroad had little effect on his powerful insularity. He remained always the Norwich man, and during the last ten years of his life painted a few pictures that come into the category of the miraculous.

Crome is the ideal example of the creed that the painter best expresses himself on his native heath, that the finest and most original works are those which emanate from a mind that has time and strength to absorb the beauty of its environment. The contrary theory has prevailed too long in this country and it has brought about temporarily an inferior style of cosmopolitan art in a land which has every reason to be proud of its masters of landscape. But the fashions are changing for the better, and it is pleasant to note articles by the Editor of the *Studio* and other journals, which may foreshadow a return to nationalism in painting.

Mr. Mottram's book, indirectly, is a plea for the English genius in art, but it is first a study of a remarkable personality, and one of the most delightful books about a painter ever written. The author of "*The Spanish Farm*" and "*Our Mr. Dormer*," brings Crome, the man, to life. We wander about old Norwich with him, waiting for him to say a few words in his halting vernacular, but simply spell-bound when he expresses himself with brush and colour as no other man has done in the same way. I do not think Mr. Mottram has written anything better than the chapter entitled "*The Young Ladies' Drawing Master*" and the last paragraphs of "*The Stone in St. George's, Colegate*." John Crome is at last securely happy in his fellow-citizen's biography.  
A.B.

#### AN ANTIDOTE—A CORDIAL

*The Bliss of the Way.* By Cecily Hallack.  
Burns Oates. 7s. 6d.

WHEN one has read "*The Bliss of the Way*," and found treasures that one little expected in another's anthology, the most difficult thing is to write a criticism of it. How should one know that lines which seemed like a long cool draught in the heat of a summer's day will mean as much to another? For anthologies are, and of necessity must be, exceptionally private and personal affairs. If it was possible to keep pace with Miss Hallack's I would advise the making of your own anthology, but for those who have neither the gift, the time, nor the inclination, I advise them to buy Miss Hallack's. There is a line in author's preface which in its context applies to a few lines by Emily Dickinson, but which I give you as my criticism of the "*Bliss of the Way*." "It is an antidote for the worst dismay, and if you are setting out anew, a cordial and stirrup-cup."

In the review of *Five Years' Hard* by General Crozier which appeared in the issue of February 11th the price was inadvertently given as 12s. 6d. net. The correct price is 7s. 6d.

## ART NOTES BY ADRIAN BURY

### THE AGNEW GALLERY

THE annual exhibition of water-colours and drawings at Messrs. Agnew's gallery in Bond Street reflects considerable credit on the selectors. It is not difficult to show a series of classics, as long as they are available. Thus we see several exquisite and little known examples of the old masters, and it is a memorable æsthetic experience to contemplate Peter de Wint's silvery study of trees and cows, "The Watering Place," and John Varley's "River Mawddach," with its majestic expanse of meadow and mountain scenery. The problem is to equal or approach this standard in choosing the work of the moderns. Many of our contemporaries here will survive the ordeal of comparison. Mr. Steer, of course, though happily with us, is already among the immortals, and his two pictures, "Thames Barges: Whitstable" and "A Sea Mist," are perfect. There is fine drawing in Mr. Harry Morley's exhibits. Mr. Allan Walton, who is well-known for his taste and skill in decorative work, contributes three strong impressions. He has a true feeling for the water colour medium, and a confident way of summarising an effect. Nor does he seek the obvious, but looks for beauty in out of the way subjects. Likewise, Mr. Keith Baynes has original vision and courageous technique.

### MESSRS. TOOTH'S GALLERIES

The fine period domestic architecture which is a sign of the building renaissance opens up the question of wall decoration. If a large oil painting has neither *raison d'être* nor space in the tiny flats of this brave new world, there are neo-Georgian rooms that still call for the humanising influence of the artist. It is interesting to note that some painters, such as Mr. Steegmann, are returning to the conversation piece which was a feature of our eighteenth century decorators. Let us hope that the vogue will revive. Meanwhile, Messrs. Tooth's exhibition of decorative pictures for period rooms, at 155, New Bond Street, is full of charm. These seventeenth and eighteenth century paintings reflect the elegance of their time, a time when every gentleman included the classical ruin in his grand tour itinerary and sought some record of his visit.

The several examples of Pannini's water-colours in this vein are carried out with this master's indefatigable insistence on detail and sentiment. Thomas Patch, in his view of "The Arno and the Ponte Trinita, Florence," caught some of the method if none of the mastery of Canaletto. "The Hanging Bridge at Chantilly," by Van der Meulen, has a decorative naïveté which is redeemed by pleasant colour. The artist encountered some difficulty with his horses and perspective, but time, which is especially kind to pictures, has minimised the faults and enlarged the virtues of this singular effort in pictorial fabrication. Francesco Zuccarelli's "Classical Landscape" No. 15 is delightful both in design and colour.

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## COMPANY MEETING

## UNDERGROUND ELECTRIC RAILWAYS GROUP

The annual general meetings of the Metropolitan District Railway Co., London Electric Railway Co., City and South London Railway Co., Central London Railway Co., London General Omnibus Co., Ltd., Metropolitan Electric Tramways Ltd., London United Tramways, Ltd., South Metropolitan Electric Tramways and Lighting Co. Ltd., London and Suburban Traction Co., Ltd., and Underground Electric Railways Co. of London Ltd. were held on February 15 at the Caxton Hall, Westminster, S.W., the Right Hon. Lord Ashfield (chairman and managing director) presiding.

The chairman, in the course of his speech, said:

The year 1931 ran a chequered course, alternately encouraging and depressing us. It opened moderately well for our undertakings, as falling costs more than counterbalanced falling traffic, and in spite of another summer bereft of its fair share of sunshine, it fairly maintained its position, in comparison with the year 1930, until the close of the holiday season. Then the creeping paralysis in trade and industry made its insidious influence felt, and a rapidly accelerating fall in the volume of traffic has led to the total number of passengers carried by the several companies represented here falling by 28,000,000. As spread over the whole year, the fall is relatively small, amounting to 1.2 per cent. only. The average receipt per passenger has also fallen by almost 1 per cent., which again is relatively small, but the combined effect of these small changes has adversely affected your fortunes.

Directly and indirectly, your companies, with their subsidiary and associated companies, have been responsible in 1931 for an aggregate traffic movement of 2,646,000,000 of passengers, which is 15,000,000 less than it was a year ago, a drop of less than 1 per cent. The share which you have in the traffic of Greater London as a whole has nevertheless risen slightly to 63 per cent., because, whatever your set-back may have been, that of other local passenger transport undertakings has been greater, though this is, maybe, a poor consolation to you.

We have sought to take our part in the new demand of the public for motor coach services by the establishment and development of such services by a subsidiary company of the London General Omnibus Company, Green Line Coaches Limited, which provides services equivalent, as closely in all respects as may be, to private car services. Throughout the year we have operated twenty-five routes into or across Central London from and to points on the outer fringe from twenty-five to thirty miles away, and have carried over 12,500,000 passengers.

If you will turn to the supplement to the annual accounts for the year 1931, printed on the yellow paper, you will see that the traffic receipts for the Common Fund companies have decreased by £291,000 in round figures. As against this decrease there is a decrease in expenditure of £244,000. This latter decrease would have been greater if it had not been necessary to include in expenditure sums amounting to £83,000 in respect of the withdrawal from service and disposal of certain capital assets. Throughout 1931 we have indeed jealously watched our expenditure, knowing that we could not count from month to month upon our traffic receipts being maintained at the old level, but there has been no attempt to secure reductions in expenditure at the sacrifice of the services offered to the public. Rather we have looked to secure savings from the improvements which have been introduced in 1931 and previous years.

I sometimes look with pride and amazement at the progress in design which the rigorous requirements of our service and the necessity for curtailed expenditure have stimulated. The failures and delays to our railway service from all causes are 5½ per cent. less in 1931 than in 1930, and 28 per cent. less than they were five years ago.

The gross revenue of the Common Fund companies in 1931 amounted to £16,547,759. Of that sum electrical current and petrol took £1,082,701, or 6.5 per cent. Other stores took £881,381, or 5.3 per cent. Taxation in all its forms required £1,497,833, or 9.1 per cent., and the miscellaneous items such as tyres, compensation, gas, water, office expenses, &c., required £997,213, or 6.0 per cent. Reserves for all purposes, including expenditure upon and provision for the renewal of the assets of the several companies, amounted to £1,236,545, or 7.5 per cent. Payments for rentals, for interest on debentures and on other fixed-interest-bearing prior charge stocks, amounted to £2,110,008, or 12.8 per cent. In the aggregate the expenses which I have so far named amount to £7,805,681, or 47.2 per cent. of the whole of the gross revenue of the companies. There remains £8,742,078, divided between direct wages and salaries amounting to £7,715,310, or 46.6 per cent., and the balance which is available for dividends upon the Ordinary stocks and shares amounting to £1,026,768, or 6.2 per cent. of the gross revenue.

Some question has been raised as to our policy of setting aside the amounts shown as appropriations to reserve. The total capital of the Common Fund companies at the close of 1931 was roundly £73,000,000, and the total amount set aside, under all heads, was again roundly £1,200,000, or something less than a sixtieth part.

Accepting then, as I am convinced you must, the reasonableness of our reserve appropriations of all sorts, the Common Fund, which remains, amounts to £1,026,768, or a sum less by £129,769 than it was for last year. The interim dividends of the railway companies in June were paid at half the rate applicable to the year 1930, and the balance now available is sufficient to pay dividends in the case of the railways at ½ per cent. less for the year. In the case of the omnibus company the interim dividend was 3½ per cent., free of tax, and the balance is sufficient to pay a further 3½ per cent., free of tax, so that the dividend for the year is 1½ per cent. less than for 1930. The necessary resolutions will be submitted later. These reduced dividends should, I submit, be accepted as favourable, having regard to the general state of affairs. I am bound to add that I think it will be difficult in the uncertainties of the future to maintain them, for the decline in traffic receipts, as you will have observed by the published weekly traffic returns, still continues.

As you are aware, we are in the midst of carrying out a programme of extension and development to our railways, decided upon two years ago, for which the bulk of the capital has already been obtained. By agreement with H.M. Treasury we have cancelled the reconstruction of stations at King's Cross, Russell-square, Edgware-road, Post Office, and Sloane-square, and reduced the amount of expenditure on works, which is to rank for annual grants at the rate of 3 per cent. for a period of 15 years, to £8,672,000 in the aggregate. I should explain that this revised programme will result in a saving of expenditure of nearly £1,000,000, and reduce the total capital sum to be spent to, roundly, £10,880,000.

Satisfactory progress is being made with the new extensions, and it is anticipated that the bulk of them will be brought into use during the year. They will, we hope, begin to earn a margin of revenue towards their cost while contributing something towards the earnings of the existing railways. They should prove a stimulus to Underground travel generally.

Leaving the Common Fund companies, I pass to the companies in the London and Suburban Traction Group. These mainly relate to tramways. The year 1931 has shown little change in their position. Yet in this year the first substantial step has been taken to modernise and re-equip them. During the year 17 miles of tramways on the London United system have been abandoned and replaced by services of trolley buses. Their full operation has only extended over three or four months, so that I cannot give you any conclusive figures as to the results, but all the indications show that, with the improved and enlarged service worked, there has been increased traffic and reduced costs sufficient at least to justify the fresh capital expenditure.

As the result of the failure of its principal subsidiary companies to pay dividends upon their Preference and Ordinary shares, the London and Suburban Traction Company is equally unable to pay any dividends on its own Preference and Ordinary shares. The situation is neither worse nor better than it was. It has been impossible even with the care and attention given to the detailed management of these companies by a diligent staff to make headway against the trend of the times.

The results of the Associated Equipment Company were again very satisfactory. The factory was fully employed throughout the year in the manufacture of passenger and commercial motor vehicle chassis, both for this country and abroad.

The net profits of the company for 1931 amounted to £150,474, and, adding to this sum the balance brought forward from 1930, amounting to £214,802, there was a sum available for dividend of £365,276. An interim dividend of 5 per cent., free of tax, absorbing £75,000, has already been paid, and a final dividend of 5 per cent., free of tax, absorbing the same amount, is now to be paid. The full dividend for the year, therefore, is 10 per cent., free of tax, and the balance carried forward to next year is £215,276.

I will now pass to the parent company, the Underground Electric Railways Company of London Limited. The net income for the year was £1,193,697, or only £25,364 less than it was a year ago. The interim dividend paid on the Ordinary shares was at the rate of 3 per cent., and the balance now available is sufficient to pay a final dividend at the rate of 4 per cent., making altogether 7 per cent. for the year, as against 8 per cent. in 1930, with a small addition of about £16,000 to the amount carried forward to another year.

The reports and accounts of the several companies were unanimously approved.

## CITY

*Lombard Street, Wednesday.*

THERE is a much more hopeful feeling evident in the City. It may be short-lived as have been many other similar bouts of optimism; but opinion seems to be growing that things are on the mend and that our problems, both national and international, are being tackled in a manner that inspires greater confidence. The patriotism of the British tax-payer and the magnificent response he has made to the Government's call for a balanced Budget have impressed the foreigner with the inherent strength of this country. Money that was withdrawn six months ago by those who had misgivings as to our financial stability is gradually filtering back and the recent depression on the Continent and in America is giving place to greater optimism. Cheaper money here is having a stimulating effect on Stock Markets and Gilt-edged stocks particularly are showing more or less sustained strength, while international counters have come into prominence as a result of the greater confidence abroad. The firmness of sterling is a healthy symptom and the fact that forward business is being done on terms favourable to the £ is indicative of the more hopeful view taken of the future.

*New Capital Issues*

Another good sign is the public appetite for first-class new capital issues. The success of the Nyasaland loan for £2,000,000, following the over-subscription of a smaller issue on behalf of the Croydon Corporation, is encouraging those who require fresh capital, and several important new issues are likely to make their appearance in the very near future. Among these is the Metropolitan District Railway issue of £2,100,000, while application forms have just been sent to the shareholders of J. Lyons and Co. in respect of an offer of £1,000,000 7 per cent. Preference shares which that company is making to its shareholders at 22s. 6d. per share. Shareholders of Northampton Electric Light and Power Company are being offered 100,000 new £1 Ordinary shares at a price of 31s. each. Other similar issues are pending and there is at the moment greater activity in the New Issue market than for a long while past. This is all to the good. Most of the new capital is being spent on betterments and will thus give that fillip to trade which it so badly needs.

*Crippling Taxation*

That the burden of taxation is crippling many industries is a truism none can gainsay. In the case of the Underground Electric Railways Company of London the burden would seem to be particularly heavy and one cannot but sympathise with Lord Ashfield in his plea for some consideration in this important matter. Not only are its

buses of standard type taxed to the extent of £373 per vehicle per annum, requiring fares of nearly two and a half passengers for every mile the omnibus travelled, but as Lord Ashfield pointed out at the meeting, the total petrol tax this year will amount roundly to £1,000,000 for the L.G.O.C. alone, while the full burden of taxation, local and national, to be met by all the companies in the group, would be almost £1,800,000. This is a big sum and in the judgment of Lord Ashfield is far greater than should equitably be imposed upon a group of companies which are supplying the public needs and exercising all possible economies in expenditure while paying most modest dividends. In this opinion the City, at any rate, fully shares.

*Good Dividend Payer*

Equally satisfactory progress is shown by the Metropolitan Electric Supply Company whose net revenue for the past year totalled £417,256 or £8,586 more than for 1930. Here again a larger capital ranked for dividend but the distribution of 10 per cent. made the two preceding years is repeated with a balance forward of £101,179. In January the shareholders received a capitalised bonus of 4 per cent. out of reserve and the issued capital now amounts to £2,840,000 of which £500,000 is in 4½ per cent. Preference shares and £2,340,000 in Ordinary shares of £1 each. The latter shares are quoted at 39s. 6d. and on a 10 per cent. dividend basis the yield is 5½ per cent. The companies' undertakings in the County of London are subject to the provisions of the London Electricity (No. 2) Act, 1925, which provides for the transfer of the undertakings to the London and Home Counties Joint Electricity Authority in 1971, and for a sliding scale of dividends and prices.

*Still Making Headway.*

Although the turnover and net trading profits of Selfridge & Co. last year showed a decrease the decline was comparatively small, and in other respects the business made further headway. In his speech at the annual meeting of shareholders Mr. Gordon Selfridge pointed out that the Company had served nearly 400,000 more customers, and had opened many thousands of new book accounts. It may certainly be true to say that in almost every great distributing business in the world last year's annual turnover had failed to equal that of 1930. In the case of Selfridge & Co. the decrease was less than 8 per cent. while the drop in trading profits was only 7.7 per cent. That the shareholders have to suffer by a reduction in their dividend from 10 to 8 per cent. is naturally disappointing, but with the business showing such vitality they may reasonably share with Mr. Selfridge the hope and expectation "that their business, their commercial ship of commerce will sail into port a year hence after a better and more profitable voyage, carrying a richer cargo of success."

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## COMPANY MEETING

## SELFRIDGE &amp; COMPANY

The twenty-fourth annual ordinary general meeting of Selfridge and Co. Ltd was held on Monday at the company's store, Oxford-street, W.

Mr. H. Gordon Selfridge (chairman and managing director) said that all over the world the same unhappy general conditions prevailed, but the people in England were not so comparatively badly off as others. In this country the creation of a tariff and the increased home demand for British-made goods should help pull them gradually out of part of their difficulties by keeping more of their money at home, by giving more men work, by restoring a certain amount of confidence, and it was to be hoped, by causing something of a reduction in the income-tax.

While we here are never over-satisfied—nor shall we ever be, no matter how agreeable the figures may be—we are obliged to recognise a comparatively good result in this year's business.

Almost without exception companies and businesses, here in this country as well as those in the United States, in Canada, in France, and elsewhere in Europe, have shown greatly decreased profits, and all the care and attention to detail management could not have prevented such results.

During the past year in almost every great distributing business in the world (and we are well acquainted with most of them) the annual turnover has failed to equal that of 1930. Throughout America the official figures (which are not quite official but nearly so) show that the losses in their annual turnover run from 10 per cent. to 40 per cent., and the average loss for America as a whole is put at 17.2 per cent. In Germany the turnover of distributing houses for the same period shows a decrease of 14.7 per cent. as compared with 1930.

Here in England monthly figures are sent by each of 150 stores and shops to the Bank of England, and there the average is struck and reported to the "Incorporated Association of Retail Distributors" who publish the figures. These results for 12 months to January 31 show in London (West)—30 stores reporting—a decrease in turnover of 8 per cent. Our decrease in returns is much less than this figure. Our floor area has not been increased over 1930.

#### Nearly 400,000 More Transactions.

While showing this comparatively small decrease in turnover we have served nearly 400,000 more customers, we have opened many thousands of new book accounts, have established new high records in numbers and amount in mail orders, in numbers of parcels delivered throughout metropolitan London, &c., &c. All of these records, while demonstrating a continual growth in the popularity of this business, go to prove the decrease of the customers' buying strength and the lower prices ruling in practically every class of merchandise.

Their average stock for the year 1931 had been turned 9.2 times. On the other hand, their expenses account for the past year was up by a small fraction of 1 per cent., and the entire increase was occasioned by the pay-roll. Their net profit was £400,269, and they declared a dividend of 8 per cent. on the Ordinary shares.

We have now begun the construction of the new addition to our premises which was referred to in my paper a year ago. We had hoped to have it partially ready for last autumn's business, but continual legal, official, and other delays put its commencement off until last December. We now hope—perhaps optimistically—to have at least part of it ready for next Christmas season. The long time required to build the great retaining walls—about 60 ft. deep and at the bottom 24 ft. thick—which are necessary to prevent any disturbance to the street proper, accounts for the delay in completion. These walls made three basements possible. If only one were necessary we could erect our building in six months or less.

The Report was adopted.

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## The "Saturday Review" Suggests This Week:

[We hope that this page will keep our readers in touch with the best of the Theatre, Film, and Wireless programmes, and the books which in our opinion are the best of the week.—Ed.]

### THEATRES

#### GILBERT WAKEFIELD'S LIST

**AMBASSADORS.** *So Far and No Father.* By H. M. Harwood. 8.45. Tues. and Fri. 2.30. Reviewed this week.

**HAYMARKET.** *Can the Leopard . . . ?* by Ronald Jeans. (Whitehall 9832.) 8.30. Wed. and Sat. 2.30. Gertrude Lawrence and Ian Hunter in a very witty and well-acted comedy.

**ROYALTY.** *While Parents Sleep.* By Anthony Kimmins. 8.40. Thurs. and Sat. 2.40. Not for the squeamish or the intellectual playgoer, but recommended for its rare vitality and boisterous high-spirits.

**HIS MAJESTY'S.** *Julius Caesar.* 8.15. Wed. and Sat. 2.30. A robustly theatrical revival by a company of "star" Shakespeareans.

**DUCHESS.** *"The Rose without a Thorn."* By Clifford Bax. 8.30. Wed. and Sat. 2.30. A dramatic and interesting play about Henry VIII. Finely written, finely acted.

**LYRIC, HAMMERSMITH.** *Derby Day.* By A. P. Herbert. Music by Alfred Reynolds. 8.30. Wed. and Sat. 2.30. A witty and amusing comic opera, satirizing kill-joy hypocrites, by that champion of British liberty, A.P.H. of Punch. Pleasant music which allows the libretto to be heard. Review next week.

**WESTMINSTER.** *Six Characters in Search of an Author.* By Pirandello. 8.30. Wed. and Sat. 2.30.

### BROADCASTING

#### WIRELESS EDITOR'S LIST

##### DAVENTRY NATIONAL

Monday, March 7, 6.50 p.m. Miss V. Sackville-West will give the weekly talk on "New Books."

7.30 p.m. The third talk in the series "How has the State met the Change?" will be given by Professor Arnold Plant, who is Sir Ernest Cassell, Professor of Commerce, London School of Economics. His subject will be "Public Economic Enterprise."

9.20 p.m. Mr. S. P. B. Mais will give the ninth talk in his series "The Unknown Island."

Wednesday, March 9, 6.50 p.m. Mr. O. Mase, the Assistant Music Director of the B.B.C. will give a talk on "Coming Programmes."

7.5 p.m. Sir Daniel Hall, K.C.B., F.R.S., Chief Scientific Adviser to the Ministry of Agriculture, will give his fortnightly talk on Farming.

7.30 p.m. The fourth talk in the series "Changes in Family Life" will be given by Professor M. Ginsberg, who will talk about "The Family as a Social Group."

Thursday, March 10, 7.30 p.m. Sir Arthur Salter, K.C.B., will continue his series "The Problem of World Government" with a talk on "How the World is Governed."

Friday, March 11, 6.50 p.m. The weekly talk on "The Week-end in the Garden" will be given by Mr. A. E. Burgess, whose subject will be "Root Crops."

### FILMS

#### MARK FORREST'S LIST

##### LONDON FILMS

**THE ACADEMY.** *Cameradschaft.* Criticized in this issue. It will replace "Sous les Toits de Paris" on Monday.

**THE REGAL AND THE LONDON PAVILION.** *High Pressure.* Criticized in this issue.

**THE NEW GALLERY.** *Forbidden.* Criticized in this issue.

**THE CARLTON.** *Doctor Jekyll and Mr. Hyde.* Some of Robert Louis Stevenson with Fredric March.

**THE MARBLE ARCH PAVILION.** *Sunshine Susie.* This comedy with music still continues. Jack Hulbert and Renate Muller.

**THE POLYTECHNIC.** *Livingstone.* This silent picture is being revived again.

**THE RIALTO.** *A Nous la Liberté.* Mr. Clair's new picture. The best film showing in London at the moment.

#### GENERAL RELEASES

*The Viking.* Seal hunting in Newfoundland.

*Secrets of Marriage.* One of the Secrets of Nature series.

*The Unholy Garden.* A moderate picture, but with Ronald Colman.

### BOOKS TO READ

#### LITERARY EDITOR'S LIST

*Thoughts on Germany.* By Richard von Kuhlmann. Macmillan. 10s. 6d. Translation of a book which met with great success in Germany last year. The author writes of the past and present policy, the disaster and hopes of the future of his country with great insight.

*The Konigsberg Adventure.* By E. Keble Chatterton. Hurst & Blackett. 18s. A true mystery sea story; an account of a rare adventure.

*Sobieski.* By J. B. Morton. Eyre & Spottiswoode. 10s. 6d.

*America Hispana.* By Walde Frank. Scribners. 16s.  
*Sir George Otto Trevelyan.* By George Macaulay Trevelyan. Longmans. 12s. 6d.

*The Epic of America.* By J. T. Adams. Routledge. 15s.

*Lake Fishing.* By Jock Scott. Routledge. 7s. 6d. Describes the technique involved in fishing for "salmon, trout and pike."

*Louder and Funnier.* By P. G. Wodehouse. Faber and Faber. 7s. 6d. A valuable and instructive commentary on many grave aspects of contemporary life.

*Easter Island.* By Robert J. Casey. Elkin, Mathews and Marrot. 18s.

## Literary

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